

Explanation Asked On FBI 'Burglaries'

United Press International

Post 7-9-75

A House subcommittee chairman has demanded a Justice Department explanation of a statement by a former FBI official that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover probably ordered some burglaries to gather intelligence.

Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), a former FBI agent and chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee that oversees the agency, also called on Attorney General Edward Levi to disavow statements by outgoing Assistant FBI Director William Sullivan defending Hoover's policies.

Sullivan, who resigned Saturday after 27 years in the FBI, said Sunday he assumed burglaries were approved by the director during Hoover's years as head of the agency.

Edwards, who said he was "distressed" by Sullivan's defense of such counterintelligence activities, said he would ask the Justice Department to explain to his subcommittee why Congress had never been told about FBI-authorized burglaries. He said the subject would be raised at hearings July 17 and 19.

Sullivan, in the television interview program "Face the Nation" (CBS, WTOP), strongly defended Hoover, who died in 1972. He also denied charges that FBI counterintelligence activities under Hoover were either "laughable" or in violation of civil liberties.

Asked if the FBI agents ever conducted burglaries, Sullivan replied he never participated in or ordered one.

"But," he added, "I would assume that in the national intelligence field, that has occurred in some offices. I think that this decision in the past was made by the top officials of the FBI, the director of the FBI, it's had his approval. I think that today it probably would have to have the approval of the Attorney General."

Sullivan said the counterintelligence programs were justified in all but a "very few" instances. He also disagreed with Levi, who described them as foolish.

Sullivan also defended "Operation Hoodwink," a program designed to pit the Communist Party against the Mafia.

"I don't think its laughable at all," he said. "... I don't think there's anything laughable about it, regardless of what the Attorney General may have said about it."

But Edwards said, "It is difficult to imagine more than a few of the [counterintelligence] actions as anything but outrageous, many subjecting the government to civil liability, many clearly illegal."

And, Edwards added, "some of them are just a scream."